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Assistance in mine action

Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United States of America and Zambia: draft resolution

Assistance in mine action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/159 of 16 December 2002 and all its previous resolutions on assistance in mine clearance and mine action, all adopted without a vote,

Recognizing that, in addition to the primary role of States, the United Nations has a significant role to play in the field of assistance in mine action, and considering mine action to be an important and integrated component of United Nations humanitarian and development activities,

Reaffirming its deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian and development problems caused by the presence of mines and other unexploded ordnance that constitute an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, to humanitarian aid operations and to reconstruction and economic development, as well as to the restoration of normal social conditions, and that have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of mine-affected countries,

Bearing in mind the serious threat that mines and other unexploded ordnance pose to the safety, health and lives of local civilian populations, as well as of personnel participating in humanitarian, peacekeeping and rehabilitation programmes and operations,

Encouraged by the reduction in the number of new mine victims, but reiterating its dismay at the existing high number of victims of mines and other unexploded ordnance, especially among civilian populations, including women and children, and recalling in this context its resolution 57/190 of 18 December 2002

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and Commission on Human Rights resolutions 2003/49 of 23 April 2003, on the human rights of persons with disabilities, and 2003/86 of 25 April 2003, on the rights of the child,[1]

Deeply alarmed by the number of mines that continue to be laid each year, as well as the presence of a decreasing but still very large number of mines and other unexploded ordnance as a result of armed conflicts, and therefore remaining convinced of the necessity and urgency of a significant increase in mine-clearance efforts by the international community with a view to eliminating the threat of landmines to civilians as soon as possible,

Noting the inclusion in Amended Protocol II[2] to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects[3] of a number of provisions of importance for mine-clearance operations, notably the requirement of detectability, and provision of information and technical and material assistance necessary to remove or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines and booby traps, and noting also that Amended Protocol II to the Convention entered into force on 3 December 1998,

Noting also the conclusions and recommendations adopted at the Fourth and Fifth Annual Conferences of the States Parties to Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, held in Geneva on 11 December 2002 and on 26 November 2003, respectively,

Noting further the new additional Protocol to address the post-conflict impact of explosive remnants of war adopted by the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, held in Geneva on 27 and 28 November 2003, and noting the agreement reached on mandates for further work by the same Meeting,

Noting that additional States have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,[4] which entered into force on 1 March 1999, bringing the total number of States that have formally accepted the obligations therein to one hundred and forty-one,

Noting also the conclusions of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, held in Bangkok from 15 to 19 September 2003, taking note of the reaffirmed commitments that were made by the States parties in the Bangkok Declaration, among other things, to pursue efforts related to the core humanitarian objectives of the Convention, urging all States parties and relevant organizations to participate actively in the work of the intersessional programme established by States parties to the Convention, and noting that the First Review Conference, to

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 3* (E/2003/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[2] CCW/CONF.I/16 (Part I), annex B.

[3] See *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, vol. 5: 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.IX.4), appendix VII.

[4] See CD/1478.

which the Secretary-General will be invited, will be held in Nairobi, from 29 November to 3 December 2004,

Stressing the need to convince mine-affected States to halt new deployments of anti-personnel mines in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of mine-clearance operations,

Stressing also the pressing need to urge non-State actors to halt immediately and unconditionally new deployments of mines and other associated explosive devices,

Recognizing the importance of assisting mine clearance in mine-affected countries by ensuring that the necessary maps and information and appropriate technical and material assistance are provided to help to remove existing minefields, mines, booby traps and other unexploded ordnance,

Noting that the resources allocated to mine-action activities have increased in recent years, but stressing the need to mobilize additional resources and to secure the best possible utilization of such resources, particularly for victim assistance, in order to meet increasing requirements, and encouraging all States, the United Nations and other international, regional and non-governmental and private organizations to continue their efforts in this regard,

Concerned at the limited availability of safe and cost-effective mine-detection and mine-clearance equipment, as well as the need for effective global coordination in research and development to improve relevant technologies, and conscious of the need to promote further and more rapid progress in this field and to foster international, national and local technical cooperation to that end,

Reaffirming the need to reinforce cooperation and coordination in the area of mine action at all levels and to devote the necessary resources to that end, including resources to support national and regional capacity-building initiatives, where applicable, and the work of the United Nations in this regard,

Noting with appreciation the finalization of an emergency response plan by the United Nations to respond to emergency mine-action requirements,

Welcoming the various established mine-action coordination centres, as well as the creation and existence of international trust funds for mine-action activities,

Noting with satisfaction the inclusion in the mandates of several peacekeeping operations of provisions relating to mine-action work carried out under the direction of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, in the context of such operations,

Commending the action taken by donor and recipient Governments, the United Nations system, regional organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations to coordinate their efforts and seek solutions to the problems related to the presence of mines and other unexploded ordnance, as well as their assistance to victims of mines,

Welcoming the role of the Secretary-General in increasing public awareness of the problem of landmines,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action[5] and the recommendations contained therein, and takes note with appreciation of the revised mine-action strategy contained in the addendum to the report;[6]

2. *Calls*, in particular, for the continuation of the efforts of States, with the assistance of the United Nations and relevant organizations involved in mine action, as appropriate, to foster the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities in countries in which mines and other unexploded ordnance constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the local population or an impediment to social and economic development efforts at the national and local levels, and urges all Member States, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, to assist mine-affected countries in the establishment and development of national capacities in mine action;

3. *Invites* Member States to develop and support national programmes, where appropriate, in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system and relevant regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations, to reduce the risks posed by landmines and other unexploded ordnance, including among women and children;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to Governments, regional organizations and other donors for their financial and in-kind contributions to mine action, including contributions for emergency operations, peacekeeping operations and for national and local capacity-building programmes;

5. *Encourages* efforts to conduct mine action in accordance with accepted national and international standards, including International Mine Action Standards, and also encourages all States involved in mine action, including troop-contributing countries conducting mine action in peacekeeping operations, to follow these standards, as applicable;

6. *Emphasizes* the importance of using an information management system, such as the Information Management System for Mine Action, in full coordination with the United Nations Mine Action Service and with the instrumental support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining;

7. *Appeals* to Governments, regional organizations and other donors to continue and, whenever possible, increase their support to mine action through reliable, predictable and timely contributions, including contributions through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action as well as to national mine-action efforts and humanitarian mine-action programmes of non-governmental organizations, to allow for the timely delivery of mine-action assistance, and stresses that such assistance should be integrated into broader humanitarian, development and other strategies;

8. *Stresses* the importance of international support for emergency assistance to victims of mines and other unexploded ordnance and for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of the victims, and also stresses that such assistance should be integrated into broader public health and socio-economic strategies;

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[5] A/58/260.

[6] A/58/260/Add.1.

9. *Encourages* all relevant multilateral and national programmes and bodies to include, in coordination with the United Nations, activities related to mine action in their humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development assistance activities, where appropriate, bearing in mind the need to ensure national and local ownership, sustainability and capacity-building;

10. *Also encourages* Member States, the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations to take further action to mainstream a gender perspective and integrate gender and age-appropriate considerations in all aspects of mine-action programming, particularly including programmes to reduce the number of child victims and relieve their plight;

11. *Stresses* the importance of cooperation and coordination in mine action, while emphasizing once again the important role of the United Nations in the effective coordination of mine-action activities, based on the United Nations policy on mine action and effective coordination,[7] and especially the role of the Mine Action Service, stresses also the important role that national authorities and regional organizations can play in this regard, as well as the important role of relevant non-governmental organizations, and underlines the need for the continuous assessment of these roles by the General Assembly;

12. *Emphasizes* the role of the Mine Action Service as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system and its ongoing collaboration with and coordination of all mine-related activities of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and in this regard expresses its appreciation of the roles played by other bodies of the United Nations system, in accordance with United Nations mine-action policy;

13. *Urges* Member States and regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to extend full assistance and cooperation to the Secretary-General and, in particular, to provide him with information and data, as well as other appropriate resources that could be useful in strengthening the coordination role of the United Nations in mine action;

14. *Takes note with appreciation* of the Mine Action Guidelines for Ceasefire and Peace Agreements, requests the Secretary-General to make them widely available to United Nations mediators, moderators, special representatives of the Secretary-General and others, as appropriate, and calls on all parties to conflict to incorporate provisions on mine action, where relevant, in ceasefire and peace agreements or other relevant arrangements;

15. *Notes* the potential that mine action can have as a peace and confidence-building measure in post-conflict situations among concerned parties;

16. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to propose, where appropriate, provisions related to mine action in his recommendations to the Security Council for peacekeeping operations;

17. *Emphasizes* the importance of undertaking further multisectoral assessments and surveys to better define the nature, scope and impact of the landmine and other unexploded ordnance problem in affected countries and to support the establishment of clear priorities and national economic and development

[7] A/53/496, annex II.

plans of action, underlining the need for participation of populations of mine-affected areas in this regard;

18. *Notes with appreciation* the ongoing development by the United Nations of the International Mine Action Standards, with the assistance of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and other partners in mine action, to support the safe and effective conduct of mine-action activities, and emphasizes the need for an inclusive process to be followed in the development and review of such standards and the importance of developing in mine-affected countries national mine-action standards based on the International Mine Action Standards;

19. *Recognizes* the importance of building national capacities for and ownership of mine-action programmes, encourages the further establishment of national mine-action centres, including those supported by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund as well as those established under the auspices of the Mine Action Service in emergency situations, and encourages States to support the activities of those centres and the trust funds established for the coordination of assistance in mine action and the promotion of national ownership;

20. *Requests* the Mine Action Service to continue developing the electronic mine information network as a user-friendly repository of mine-related information and as a means for mine-action programmes to circulate on a regular basis to donors and other partners standard reports on the scope and impact of the mine problem, available mine-action resources and capacities and the progress achieved in the field;

21. *Emphasizes* the importance of recording the location of mines, of retaining all such records and making them available to concerned parties upon cessation of hostilities, and welcomes the strengthening of the relevant provisions in international law;

22. *Calls upon* Member States, especially those that have the capacity to do so, to provide the necessary information and technical, financial and material assistance, as appropriate, and to locate, remove, destroy or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby traps and other devices, in accordance with international law, as soon as possible;

23. *Urges* Member States and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations that have the ability to do so to provide, as appropriate, technological assistance to mine-affected countries, to promote user-oriented scientific research on and development of mine-action techniques and technology, within reasonable time frames, so that mine-action activities may be carried out more safely and cost-effectively, and also urges them to promote collaboration at all levels in this regard;

24. *Invites* States to explore the strengthening of internationally negotiated non-discriminatory legal instruments that address landmines and other unexploded ordnance, as well as their victims;

25. *Takes note with appreciation* of the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to increase public awareness of the impact of the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the progress achieved on all relevant issues outlined both in his previous reports to the Assembly on assistance in mine action and in the present resolution, including the progress made by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international and regional organizations as well as national programmes, and on the operation of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and other mine-action programmes, as well as a report on the first implementation of the emergency response plan and lessons learned from this experience and on the implementation of the strategy for the period 2001-2005;

27. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session the item entitled "Assistance in mine action".